

My Name is Ben Hall

Words distilled by John Manifold from A B Paterson's Old Bush Songs and set to a varsovienna. Manifold (1915–85) was born into the squattocracy but time spent in England during the rise of fascism made him a 'partisan for peace'. Returning to post-war Australia his was involved in 'subversive acts' including writing poetry, collecting ballads and folklore, singing, and making musical instruments.

My - - name is Ben Hall, from Mur - ru - run - di I - - came;
The ___ cause of my turn - out you - - all know the same.
I was sent to the gaol, my catt le turned to the - - Crown,
I was forced to the bush, my - - sor rows to drown.

I am always well mounted; with a gun in my hand,
And I speak people fair when I bid them to stand;
And I act most gently towards all womankind
Tho' my false wife's behaviour is still on my mind.

I once met a squatter, I knew he had cash,
For the evening before he'd been cutting a dash;
But he handed straight over when my pistols I showed,
So I gave back five pounds he might spend on the road.

Here's a health to Frank Gardiner that leader so fine
And also Jack Vane who is serving his time!
With my friends in the bush I'll distribute this wealth,
And I always reserve my last shot for myself!